LEFTWARD TO SCOFIELD:
THE ECLIPSE OF THE KINGDOM IN
POST-CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

russell d. moore*

The protagonist of Walker Percy's novel *The Moviegoer* would salve his depression by reading the liberal and conservative magazines in his neighborhood New Orleans library. The ideological conflicts in the pages were, to him, a "sign of life" in an otherwise lonely and impersonal cosmos.[1] For some, the ongoing skirmishes between traditionalists and reformists over evangelical boundaries might seem to be a sign of life in a movement questing for an identity after Billy Graham and Carl F. H. Henry. For both sides of the divide, however, the issues raised by "post-conservative" proposals represent a challenge to the uneasy consensus of the postwar movement. For reformists, the post-conservative proposals are true to the heritage of evangelical theology as a movement initiated for the reformation of American fundamentalism. And yet, recent developments reveal that the evangelical left may be pushing evangelical theology away from the theological consensus around the centrality of the Kingdom of God that the founders of evangelicalism sought to establish and saw developed into a full-blown consensus by the end of the century. And, in so doing, post-conservative proposals represent an ironic regression to the doctrinal reductionism of twentieth-century fundamentalism.

I. POST-CONSERVATIVE PROPOSALS
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

Like evangelicalism itself, the "post-conservative" or "reformist" strands within the movement are difficult to define with precision. This is because reformist evangelicalism is less a "party" than a constellation of proposals seeking to reform various aspects of traditional evangelical theology. Both sides would recognize these reform efforts to include open theist critiques of the classical doctrine of God, postmodern and narrative revisions of the doctrines of revelation and biblical authority, evangelical feminist advocacy for an egalitarian model of gender roles, and inclusivist proposals on the

* Russell Moore is dean of the school of theology and senior vice president for academic administration at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280.

[1] Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer* (New York: Random House, 1960; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1998) 100.

salvation of those apart from conscious faith in Christ.[2] These various re-
form efforts do not necessarily overlap completely in every case. There are,
for instance, many evangelical feminists who would embrace an otherwise
thoroughly traditionalist framework of evangelical theology.[3] Nonetheless,
there is unanimity among reformists that the "rigid" conservatism of the
evangelical movement should be replaced by a broader understanding of what
it means to be an evangelical Protestant at the beginning of the twenty-first
century.

To understand the project of "post-conservative" theology, one must ex-
amine the context of the emergence of the postwar evangelical movement as
a theological enterprise. One of the few matters of evangelical historiogra-
phy that all sides of the evangelical debates can agree on is the role of Carl
Henry's 1947 manifesto *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*
in shaping the theological definition of the founding era. For Henry and his
co-belligerents, the problem with American fundamentalism was not simply
cultural and political isolation. This was a symptom, not a cause, of a larger
theological problem. The evangelicalism proposed by Henry would seek to
reform fundamentalism by developing a coherent theology of the Kingdom
that could unite evangelicals doctrinally and inform an evangelical theology
of Christ, the church, and salvation, thus transcending the divide between
dispensationalist and covenantal conservatives.

Henry's problem with fundamentalism was not that it was too theologi-
cally rigorous, but that is was not theological enough. Henry and his fellow
evangelicals commended fundamentalism for the defense of the "five points"
of the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, and the rest. But they lamented that
conservative Protestantism was only defined by reaction to liberal theology.[4]
They further warned that complacency with the "fragmented doctrines" of
fundamentalism would never move conservatism beyond doctrinal reduction-
ism and toward a "united evangelical action." This was hampered by a lack
of theological cohesiveness in the movement—especially as it centered on
debates related to the Kingdom of God. The Fundamentalist-Modernist Con-
troversy had provided a common enemy against which conservative Protes-
tants, especially confessional Calvinists and dispensational premillennialists,
could coalesce in a common defense of orthodoxy. Henry, however, sought to
serve in a role similar to that of William F. Buckley, Jr., in Buckley's suc-
cessful attempt to create a "fusionist" postwar conservative political coali-
tion between libertarians and traditionalists against the common threat of

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[2] Both proponents and critics of the evangelical left identify this basic constellation of reform-
ist positions. See, for instance, reformist advocate Roger E. Olson, "Postconservative Evangelicals
Greet the Postmodern Age," *Christian Century* (3 May 1995) 480; and his traditionalist interlo-
cutor Millard J. Erickson, *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Postconservative Evangelical The-
ology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997) 29–30.

[3] Millard Erickson and Roger Nicole, for instance, two of the most outspoken critics of open
theism, are members of the board of Christians for Biblical Equality, an evangelical feminist
organization.

[4] Carl F. H. Henry, "Dare We Renew the Controversy? Part II: The Fundamentalist Reduction,"
Christianity Today 1/20 (24 June 1957) 23.

global communism and domestic liberalism.[5] The intellectual leaders of the fledgling evangelical movement after World War II recognized that a vast cooperative movement of conservative American Protestants would require more than tactical alliances against mainline liberalism on the left, obscurantist fundamentalism on the right, and a rising tide of secularism on the horizon. Henry's *Uneasy Conscience*, therefore, insisted that a socially and politically engaged evangelicalism could not penetrate society so long as the movement itself was saddled with internal theological skirmishes.[6] In this, Henry received the hearty agreement of other leaders such as Harold J. Ockenga and Edward J. Carnell.[7]

Among the primary threats to a cohesive evangelical movement were the skirmishes between Reformed and dispensational theologies, which Henry viewed as part of a larger trend of evangelical "navel-gazing."[8] This was, however, a real threat to evangelical theological cohesiveness, especially since the debates between the groups predated the postwar evangelical movement itself.[9] This lack of cohesion was even more important given that the bone of contention between evangelical covenantalists and evangelical dispensationalists was the concept Henry identified in *Uneasy Conscience* as most fundamental to an articulation of Christian sociopolitical engagement: the Kingdom of God.[10] As such, the emerging evangelical movement could not

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[5] For a discussion of the "fusionist" agenda of Buckley and Frank S. Meyer in the formation of the American conservative movement, see George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1996). See also Godfrey Hodgson, *The World Turned Right Side Up: A History of the Conservative Ascendancy in America* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1996).

[6] Henry wrote: "What concerns me more is that we have needlessly invited criticism and even ridicule, by a tendency in some quarters to parade secondary and sometimes even obscure aspects of our position as necessary frontal phases of our view. To this extent we have failed to oppose the full genius of the Hebrew-Christian outlook to its modern competitors. With the collapse of Renaissance ideals, it is needful that we come to a clear distinction, as evangelicals, between those basic doctrines on which we unite in a supernaturalistic world and life view and the area of differences on which we are not in agreement while yet standing true to the essence of biblical Christianity" (*Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* 10).

[7] See, for example, Harold J. Ockenga, "The Unvoiced Multitudes," in *Evangelical Action! A Report of the Organization of the National Association of Evangelicals for United Action* (Boston: United Action Press, 1942) 27; and Edward John Carnell, *The Case for Orthodox Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959) 114–19.

[8] Carl F. H. Henry, *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco: Word, 1976) 29.

[9] This is seen in the contentious battles within the Presbyterian communion over the 1941 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States controversy over whether dispensationalism was within the bounds of the Westminster Confession of Faith. This move was denounced by Dallas Seminary president Lewis Sperry Chafer in "Dispensational Distinctions Challenged," *BibSac* 100 (1943) 337–43.

[10] As Sydney Ahlstrom observes: "[Dispensationalism] aroused strong resistance among American Protestants by denying what most evangelicals and all liberals firmly believed—that the Kingdom of God would come as part of the historical process. They could not accept the dispensationalist claim that all Christian history was a kind of meaningless 'parenthesis' between the setting aside of the Jews and the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom. This claim aroused violent reactions because it provided a rationale for destructive attitudes and encouraged secession from existing denominations. Especially objectionable was the tendency of dispensationalists to look

dismiss the covenant/dispensational controversies over the Kingdom as mere quibbling over secondary matters; nor could these concerns be divorced from the rest of the doctrinal synthesis as though the differences were tantamount to the timing of the Rapture. Dispensationalists charged covenant theologians with shackling the biblical witness to a unitary understanding centered on the justification of individuals rather than the larger cosmic purposes of God. Covenant theologians accused dispensationalists of denying the present reality of the Kingdom of Christ, divorcing the relevance of the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount from this age, and with denigrating the centrality of the church by considering it a "parenthesis" in the plan of God. These Kingdom-oriented differences were multitudinous; and none of them could be resolved by an umbrella statement on last things appended to the conclusion of the National Association of Evangelicals statement of faith.

The evangelical movement's theologians seemed to realize that more than doctrinal détente was needed between these two groups if evangelicalism was ever to go beyond its Kingdom paralysis toward a cohesive theology of evangelical engagement. As such, Henry's *Uneasy Conscience* waded into the Kingdom debate as an incipient call for a new consensus, one that was a break from the Kingdom concept of classical dispensationalism and also from the spiritual understanding of many covenant theologians.[11] Henry was joined in this by the exegetical and biblical theological syntheses of George Eldon Ladd, who went even further in calling for a new evangelical vision of the Kingdom, usually riling both dispensational premillennialists and covenantal amillennialists in the process.[12]

The incendiary debates about the Kingdom within conservative Christianity, particularly between dispensationalists and covenant theologians, had led, Henry argued, to a "growing reluctance to explicate the kingdom idea in fundamentalist preaching."[13] This aversion was so pronounced, he noted, that a fundamentalist spokesman had warned him to "stay away from the

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for the Antichrist among the 'apostate churches' of this 'present age'" (*A Religious History of the American People* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972]) 811.

[11] The primary task of the theological vision of *Uneasy Conscience* was the attempt to find a mediating position between the "Kingdom then" concept of fundamentalist dispensationalism and the "Kingdom now" concept of the liberal Social Gospel. In so doing, Henry would challenge the Kingdom concepts of both groups, as in, for instance, his treatment of the law in his *Christian Personal Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957) 278–326. Here Henry sides with the Reformed evangelicals against the dispensationalists in his insistence that the Sermon on the Mount is a particularization of the requirements of God for new covenant Christians. Henry also maintains here that the moral law, as summarized in the Mosaic Decalogue, is binding on new covenant believers.

[12] For Ladd's work on the Kingdom, see George Eldon Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952); idem, *The Gospel and the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959); idem, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974); and Ladd's *magnum opus*, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974). For examples of dispensationalist and Reformed covenantalist responses to Ladd, see Ladd's interchanges with dispensationalist Herman Hoyt, amillennialist Anthony Hoekema, and postmillennialist Lorraine Boettner in *The Meaning of the Millennium* (ed. Robert G. Clouse; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1977).

[13] Henry, *Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* 51.

kingdom" when addressing the root of the uneasy conscience.[14] Jettisoning such advice, however, Henry set forth his manifesto for sociopolitical engagement, as, above all, a theological statement; more specifically, it was a plea for an evangelical Kingdom theology.[15] For Henry, the urgency of such a Kingdom theology was rooted not only in the theological fragmentation of evangelicals over the Kingdom question, but also because only a Kingdom theology could address the specific theological reasons behind fundamentalist doctrinal reductionism.

In the years since the founding era, an uncanny consensus has been achieved among evangelicals on the most divisive aspects of Kingdom theology.[16] Evangelical theology—including its dispensationalist and Reformed wings—has now coalesced around an "already/not yet" vision of inaugurated eschatology. As Henry said it would, this consensus has had profound implications for the starting point for evangelical treatments of ecclesiology and soteriology. The Kingdom consensus has also sought to unify evangelicals around a common biblical understanding of the creation purposes of God in the story line of Scripture. With a Christocentric hermeneutic of the Kingdom, evangelical theology increasingly sees the narrative of Scripture not simply as a blueprint to rescue isolated souls to heaven away from a corrupt creation, but as warfare to reclaim the cosmos from its enemy occupation by sin, death, and the demonic powers. Post-conservative evangelical theology has contributed to this renaissance of Kingdom reflection.

Reformist evangelical Stanley Grenz articulates better than most the growing consensus on inaugurated eschatology, carefully outlining the doctrinal loci of Christian theology in decidedly eschatological terms with poles of initial fulfillment and future consummation.[17] Likewise, historian Roger Olson embraces the "already/not yet" as one of the resolved tensions that he sees as the genius of evangelical theology's quest for mediation between theological extremes.[18] Grenz further develops a consistently cosmic and Kingdom understanding of salvation seen in terms of God's purpose to restore creation through Christ.[19]

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[14] Ibid.

[15] So Henry contended that *Uneasy Conscience* was written in order "to urge upon evangelicals the necessity for a deliberate restudy of the whole kingdom question, that the great evangelical agreements may be set effectively over against the modern mind, with the least dissipation of energy on secondary issues" (ibid.).

[16] For a discussion of this, see Russell D. Moore, "Kingdom Theology and the American Evangelical Consensus: Emerging Implications for Sociopolitical Engagement" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002).

[17] This is especially clear in Grenz's treatment of Christology and pneumatology. Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 327–34, 361–71.

[18] Roger E. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002) 331–57.

[19] Grenz writes: "The biblical writers also envision the reconciliation of humankind with the entire creation, including our physical environment which will experience the cessation of hostilities and the advent of peace. One day the animals will live in harmony with each other (Isa 65:25), and the leaves of the trees will bring healing to the nations (Rev 22:2). The Christological center of the Bible leads us to conclude that this reconciliation will come as the effect of the work of Christ on behalf of the entire cosmos" (*Theology for the Community of God* 348).

This Kingdom development can be seen even among the arguably most radical departure from traditional evangelical thought, open theism, especially in the "trinitarian warfare worldview" articulated by Gregory Boyd.[20] Boyd argues, in distinctly Ladd-like terms, for a Kingdom perspective on the miracles of Jesus, his post-resurrection enthronement, and on the tension between initial fulfillment and final consummation, even as he places the "already/not yet" schema of Kingdom fulfillment within an open view of God's relationship to the world and the demonic powers.[21] As such, it would seem that Boyd has adopted much of the Kingdom-focused inaugurated eschatology of Ladd, as mediated through the spiritual warfare motifs of the third-wave charismatic appropriation of Kingdom theology.[22] Though radically differing with postwar evangelical theology on many issues, Boyd agrees with Henry and Ladd that salvation is related to the overthrow of Satanic rule, that it is cosmic in its scope, that it is to be seen as the restoration of the created order (including human viceregency over the earth), and that it is to be placed within the context of the inbreaking of the eschatological Kingdom in the person and work of Jesus as both the incarnate God and as the head of a new humanity. Ironically, Boyd traces part of his understanding of the cosmic implications of salvation to the work of a prominent European dispensationalist, Erich Sauer.[23]

Boyd's warfare worldview is in many ways the culmination of post-conservative evangelicalism's attempt to break with the individualism of American revivalism and the "flatness" of much evangelical biblical interpretation. In so doing, Boyd has identified perhaps the defining theme of canonical revelation—the triumph of Christ as divine-human warrior in the restoration of a fallen cosmos (Rev 12:1–17).[24] This is a much-needed corrective to at least some of what Boyd identifies as a "blueprint" reading of redemptive history, which does indeed tend toward the bloodless and the abstract. It also puts the emphasis where Scripture does on the *telos* of the program of redemption—not on God's glory in the abstract, or on the justification of the individual sinner, but in the glory of God in the exaltation of Jesus as the triumphant Final Adam and mediatorial Warrior-King (Rom 8:29; 1:10; Eph 3:21; Col 1:18). This return to a biblical understanding of Kingdom and warfare is perhaps why the best aspects of the warfare world-

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[20] For a sketch of Boyd's "warfare worldview" in opposition to what he calls the traditional Reformed "meticulous blueprint" view of divine providence, see Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997) 9–27.

[21] Boyd, *God at War* 171–268. Boyd, however, radically alters the traditional perspective of evangelical Kingdom theology on the relationship between the eschatological Kingdom and the general sovereignty of God, with his view that the cosmos is ultimately "more of a democracy than it is a monarchy."

[22] It is interesting to note here that Boyd's *God at War* received a commendation from C. Peter Wagner, the Fuller Theological Seminary church growth scholar who has drawn heavily from the "power evangelism" thought of John Wimber.

[23] See, for instance, Boyd, *God at War* 106–10; and *Satan and the Problem of Evil* 315–16.

[24] Boyd is hardly the only contemporary evangelical scholar to emphasize the divine warrior theme. See Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, *God Is a Warrior* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

view (along with some of its unfortunate elements—such as God as divine risk-taker) are resonating with popular evangelical piety in such projects as John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart* books.[25] If this appropriation of the Kingdom warfare imagery present in Scripture and the patristic tradition were magnified across the evangelical spectrum, the implications for the worship, evangelism, spirituality, cultural engagement, and internal structures of the churches could be monumental—and perhaps more significant than Henry and his generation's call for an evangelical renaissance in university education, philosophy, the sciences, and so forth. Catholic thinker Leon Podles is surely correct when he notes that the lack of emphasis on the cosmic warfare imagery of Scripture is one reason why much of both Catholic liturgy and Protestant revivalism has devolved into a saccharine sentimentality that tends to alienate men and rob worship of the gravity and awe that much of contemporary worship movements seek—and fail—to capture.[26] A significant advance in the evangelical theology of the Kingdom is possible if the rest of the movement is prompted by Boyd to think through the warfare implications of an inaugurated Kingdom eschatology.

II. POST-CONSERVATIVE PROPOSALS
AND THE COLLAPSE OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

Despite such hopeful signs of post-conservative scholarship on Kingdom theology, the movement represents in many ways the negation of what the founding generation hoped to achieve with a consensus Kingdom theology. The first threat to such cohesion is the evangelical left's increasing reticence about the language and definition of the Kingdom of God itself. In this, many of them join liberal Protestantism's fear that the centrality of the Kingdom sacrifices priorities of egalitarianism and divine vulnerability and relationality.

Stanley Grenz, for instance, explicitly seeks to recover evangelical ecclesiology by replacing a Kingdom focus with a "community" focus as the integrative motif of evangelical theology.[27] This is to be attributed, Grenz argues, to the lack of content inherent in the term "Kingdom," a very real concern in light of the multifarious uses of the "Kingdom" concept in the twentieth century.[28] Grenz proceeds to argue further that biblical ecclesiology demonstrates that the centrality of the Kingdom is superseded in Scripture by a more fundamental interpretive motif, that of community, so that "the

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[25] John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001).

[26] Leon Podles, *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity* (Dallas: Spence, 1999) 201–9.

[27] Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* 22–24; idem, *Renewing the Center* 212–17.

[28] "Without a clear understanding of the nature of the kingdom, kingdom theology is inadequate to the task of indicating what the world is like when it is transformed by the divine rule." Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001) 234.

concept of community forms the content of the kingdom of God." This contention is problematic in light of the fact that, as noted in this study, the nature of the "Kingdom" in contemporary evangelical theology is rather sharply defined. Grenz's preferred alternative of "community," however, suffers from competing and contradictory definitions even from those who share Grenz's postmodern communitarian commitments.[29]

Grenz's further contention that the Kingdom motif is subservient to the community motif in Scripture is even more dubious. While Grenz is correct that the goal of the eschatological Kingdom is, as noted above, not merely a Kingdom but a Kingdom community, he is less persuasive when he defines the biblical priorities. "When God's reign is present—that is, when God's will is done—community emerges," Grenz writes. "Or, stated in the opposite manner, the emergence of community marks the presence of God's rule and the accomplishing of God's will."[30] And yet, Scripture does not argue that the emergence of just *any* community signals the reign of God, only a community formed by the Spirit under the sovereign lordship of the exalted Christ.[31] Thus, the NT presents the Kingdom community in terms of its relationship to a Head and King, the sovereign covenant Messiah who is establishing his reign in the midst of the Body (Matt 18:20; John 14:18; 18:37; 1 Cor 12:12–31; 2 Cor 6:14–18; Eph 2:20–21; 3:21; 5:23; Phil 3:20; Col 1:18; 2:6–15; 1 Pet 2:4–10; 1 John 5:19–20; Rev 1:19–3:22). The developments toward an evangelical Kingdom ecclesiology, especially within the modified covenant and dispensational traditions, maintain Grenz's helpful call for a community focus, while at the same time understanding that it is the Kingdom that defines the community, and not the other way around.[32] In so doing, the emerging con-

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[29] Robert Booth Fowler surveys the definitions of "community" offered by communitarians ranging from Robert Bellah to Stanley Hauerwas to Rosemary Radford Ruether and concludes, "No single version of community dominates present-day discussion." Robert Booth Fowler, "Community: Reflections on a Definition," in *New Communitarian Thinking: Virtues, Institutions, and Communities* (ed. Amitai Etzioni; Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995) 88. Likewise, philosopher Raymond Plant describes "community" as having "a high level of use but a low level of meaning," making it "one of the most pervasive, yet indefinite terms" in use in public discourse. Raymond Plant, "Community," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (ed. David Miller; Oxford: Blackwell, 1987) 88.

[30] Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism* 235.

[31] Grenz seems to recognize this elsewhere, as he assumes that the goal of creation and redemption is not community *qua* community, but is rather an eschatological community under the rule of the triune God. Thus, he can argue: "The central motif of biblical eschatology is the assertion that the triune God is at work in history *effecting the consummation of the divine reign by establishing community*. The biblical perspective considers the history of the world in the context of theological question of ultimate sovereignty. Is the Creator lord over creation, or is the universe self-existing and autonomous?" (Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* 651; emphasis mine).

[32] After all, a "community" may exist without explicit reference to God, much less to the incarnate Christ. A "Kingdom," however, presupposes the existence of a King, defined in Scripture as a particular "community," the triune God. As biblical scholar Marcus Borg argues, in the NT "the image 'Kingdom' is intrinsically corporate or communal, implying a community of people living as subjects of a king." Marcus J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness, and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998) 264. It is difficult to see how the equal and opposite case could be made.

sensus maintains the NT emphasis on the church as community without sacrificing its Christocentric and eschatological orientation.[33]

Even starker are the ways in which feminist theological proposals are moving some sectors of reformist evangelicalism away from Kingdom-centered theology. John Sanders commends open theism for replacing the "operative root metaphor" of classical theism of "God as creator, judge, and king" with that of "God as savior, lover, and friend."[34] Sanders elucidates this root metaphor revision by noting that open theism has benefited from feminist theology's critiques of traditional models of divine providence, which Sanders characterizes as portraying God as "a real Marlboro man."[35] In the same vein, Sanders gives a qualified endorsement of some feminist theologians' rejection of meticulous sovereignty as "divine rape."[36]

Similarly, open theist Clark Pinnock insists that evangelical theology should abandon the Kingdom of God as a root metaphor, since a "Kingdom theology" drives one toward a traditional understanding of God's relationship to the cosmos.[37] Pinnock directly ties an open theist understanding of sovereignty to an evangelical feminist view of gender roles, particularly in contradistinction to the confessional commitments of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in favor of both classical theism and a complementarian view of gender distinctions. "I get suspicious when the same people who want to protect God's sovereignty also want to keep women in their subordinate place," Pinnock argues. "Why do they not see that the Father whom they claim to exalt is not the 'father' of patriarchal power but the God of Jesus Christ who woos us through his self-giving love?"[38]

At the same time, evangelical feminism is likewise revising the Kingdom concept. Mainline feminist theology long ago dispensed with language of God as "King" or "Father" as too distinctively "male" in its cast.[39] Such was about much more than language, however, as the language shift revealed an underlying revision also in the God/cosmos relationship itself—away from sovereignty and toward the "cooperation" between the Creator and the

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[33] In so doing, evangelical ecclesiology invariably is dependent upon a robust evangelical epistemology, especially as it distinguishes itself from a revisionist Protestant left that is often unsure how a doctrine of the church can fit within a paradigm built on dissent and mistrust of authority. See, for example, Nancy Watson, "Faithful Dissenters? Feminist Ecclesiologies and Dissent," *SJT* 51 (1998) 464–84.

[34] Christopher A. Hall and John Sanders, *Does God Have a Future? A Debate on Divine Providence* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003) 123.

[35] Ibid. 127.

[36] Ibid. 137–38.

[37] Pinnock explains: "Theologies seek root metaphors to help express their vision of God. Some make 'king' the key metaphor and generate a view of God in causal terms; others feature 'judge' and come up with a religious system of rights and duties. The open view is centered on God as a loving person and lifts up the personal relations God seeks to have with creaturely persons." Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 179.

[38] Ibid. 182.

[39] For a study of this trend within egalitarian evangelicalism, see Randy Stinson, "Our Mother Who Art in Heaven: A Brief Overview and Critique of Evangelical Feminists and the Use of Feminine God-Language," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 8 (2003) 20–33.

creation.[40] As the move toward "inclusive God-language" (including "Mother God" liturgy and Sophia Christology) gains ground among evangelical feminists, the example of such moves in mainline Protestantism should give evangelicals pause. Far from expressing the "relationality" of the immanent God, such proposals have resulted in the marginalizing of personal language in Scripture to the category of metaphor, resulting in a God concept that is ambiguous at best and impersonal at worst.[41]

But, as the founding generation of evangelical theologians understood, it is the Kingdom concept that preserves the personality and relationality of God. The Kingdom idea, with its concomitant view of divine sovereignty, as Richard Niebuhr has argued, protected classical theism from the Aristotelian/ Thomistic synthesis of a detached, apathetic God concept so opposed by relational theists.[42] Thus, Henry directly correlated the limited and impersonal Hegelian God of Protestant liberalism with the politicized moralism of the Social Gospel. God was not seen as a monarchial Creator reigning providentially sovereign over the cosmos so God eventually became simply the metaphysical grounding for human activism:

> For God was viewed as man's moral equal, endowed only with larger perfections. In the realm of morals, the voice of God was equated with the voice of conscience. Deity never demanded more than the higher self, except in terms of other higher human selves. God's thoughts and ways are our highest thoughts and ways, except on a grander scale. Thus theological students were told that "God is at least as good as the Red Cross, or as the Y.W.C.A." and not infrequently the deity concept was impersonally merged with "the sum total of the forces at work for righteousness in our environment." The moral "otherness" or holiness of God was obscured.[43]

Of course, the open theist proposal within evangelical theology does not challenge the holiness, personality, or "otherness" of God. Nonetheless, open theism is following Social Gospel Protestantism in seeking to maintain the centrality of the Kingdom of God while redefining the sovereignty of God. For all his talk of the "Kingdom" concept being rescued by the Social Gospel, Walter Rauschenbusch disliked the concept of God as a King. Thus, Rauschenbusch argued that Jesus, by calling God "Father" instead of "King" had "democratized the conception of God" by disconnecting the idea of God "from the coercive and predatory State, and transferred it to the realm of family life, the chief social embodiment of solidarity and love."[44] Rauschenbusch's

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[40] See, for instance, Baptist theologian Molly T. Marshall who ties a feminist-liberationist theology to a full-blown panentheism. Molly T. Marshall, *Joining the Dance: A Theology of the Spirit* (Valley Forge: Judson, 2003).

[41] See the incisive critique of feminist revisions of the doctrine of God in Donald Bloesch, *The Battle for the Trinity: The Debate over Inclusive God-Language* (Grand Rapids: Servant, 1985).

[42] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1937) 17–44.

[43] Carl F. H. Henry, *The Protestant Dilemma: An Analysis of the Current Impasse in Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 131.

[44] Thus, Rauschenbusch concludes: "He not only saved humanity; he saved God. He gave God his first chance of being loved and of escaping from the worst misunderstandings conceivable. The value of Christ's idea of the Fatherhood of God is realized only by contrast to the despotic ideas

language here shifting a "governing" imagery (perhaps the governance of a "Kingdom"?) to a "family" imagery is remarkably similar to the "family room" imagery sought by Clark Pinnock and others to preserve God's "relationality."[45]

Moreover, Rauschenbusch was able to articulate his utopian vision of upward human progress only because he posited that the universe "is not a despotic monarchy, with God above the starry canopy and ourselves down here; it is a spiritual commonwealth with God in the midst of us."[46] A growing number of open theists are articulating a very similar model, even as they embrace the construct of an inaugurated eschatology. Gregory Boyd, for instance, in language starkly similar to Rauschenbusch, proposes that evangelicals think of the cosmos as "by divine choice, more of a democracy than it is a monarchy."[47] John Sanders likewise laments the "domineering ways" in which the metaphor of God as King has influenced evangelical theology.[48] Perhaps even more remarkable is the way in which Sanders attempts to have a Christocentric and canonical Kingdom theology after having thus redefined "monarchial" ideas about God. "Indeed the reading of the Old Testament legitimately provides for a world-ruling messiah, but God simply chose differently in Jesus," Sanders concludes.[49] It is quite difficult to see how evangelical theology can maintain, under such circumstances, a consensus view of a "world-ruling Messiah" who has initiated his all-encompassing Kingdom—a Kingdom granted to him by the sovereignty of his Father—over the pilgrim community of the regenerate church. Henry's warning that evangelical engagement cannot "go on eschatology alone," but must be centered on the doctrine of God," which grounds creation, redemption, and consummation, is precisely on target at this point.[50]

Key to the developing evangelical consensus on the Kingdom has been its Christocentric core. Evangelical Kingdom theology in the late twentieth century sought to recover the biblical emphasis that the sovereignty of God is not revealed as an atemporal, self-directed attribute, but is instead revealed in the context of the dynamic relation between God and His creation as he sovereignly directs it toward its appointed end—the summing up of all things in Christ (Eph 1:10). This was, for Henry, Ladd, and others in the postwar generation, the fatal flaw with a dispensational Bible conference movement within fundamentalism that popularized the schema of a rejected Kingdom offer to Israel and the Body of Christ as a "parenthesis" in the

which it opposes and was meant to replace" (*A Theology for the Social Gospel* 174–75).

[45] Clark H. Pinnock and Robert C. Brow, *Unbounded Love: A Good News Theology for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994) 15–34.

[46] Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* 49.

[47] Boyd, *God at War* 58.

[48] Sanders, *The God Who Risks* 36.

[49] Ibid. 300 n. 20.

[50] Diane Hochstedt Butler, "An Interview with Carl F. H. Henry," *TSF Bulletin* (March-April 1987) 18.

Kingdom program. While both dispensationalists and covenantalists within evangelicalism have reached consensus on this issue, a growing number of reformist evangelicals wish to return to the Kingdom understanding of the *Scofield Reference Bible*. John Sanders, for instance, argues against charges of open theist heterodoxy on the contingency of divine prophecy by aligning himself with the classical dispensationalist understanding of the church as "a previously non-prophesied mystery/parenthesis."[51] This is not a minor detail in Sanders' proposal. Instead, Sanders adopts a *bona fide* Kingdom offer theology that would have outraged even Scofield. Indeed, for Sanders, even the cross is contingent and comes about "only through God's interaction with humans in history."[52] Clark Pinnock likewise praises classical dispensationalism for recognizing the "flexibility of God: God offered Israel the kingdom in Jesus and his plan was thwarted, which lead to a fresh initiative."[53] And yet, this "fresh initiative" is the Body of Christ, the church. Does Pinnock really wish to retread the diminished ecclesiology of classical dispensationalism?[54]

This de-emphasis on the church in the plan of God by reformist evangelicalism springs from the exact same root the early evangelical theologians identified in classical dispensational fundamentalism: a failure to see the Christocentric character of Scripture. Bernard Ramm, for instance, faulted classical dispensationalism with speculation about prophecy charts and theories about postponed kingdoms and resumed animal sacrifices because dispensationalism failed to see how the whole scope of the divine purposes were related to the identity and mission of Jesus.[55] Classical dispensationalism abstracted both Israel and the church from the overarching purposes of God putting all things under the feet of Jesus as the focal point of all the creational intent and covenantal promise of God. Reformist evangelicalism, in several of its current forms, is returning to this exact same error. What does it do to the Christocentric center of Scripture when open theists contend that God intended to establish the kingly line of Saul of the tribe of Benjamin for perpetual rule over Israel, "but in light of Saul's disobedience God turns to another"?[56] Not only does such a suggestion do violence to prophetic passages such as Gen 49:8–12, 27 that grant the preeminence and kingship to Judah, it, even more importantly, marginalizes the centrality of the incarnate Christ to the unveiling of God's purposes in history.

Open theists are not alone among post-conservatives in calling for a move away from a Christocentric Kingdom theology. Stanley Grenz critiques the

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[51] This is from page eight, footnote five, of John Sanders's paper to the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) Executive Committee, defending himself in the fall of 2003 against charges by Roger Nicole that he should be expelled from the Society. The paper may be accessed at www.etsjets.org.

[52] Sanders, *The God Who Risks* 100.

[53] Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover* 44.

[54] For an insightful critique of the older forms of dispensationalism, see Michael Williams, *This World Is Not My Home: The Origins and Development of Dispensationalism* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2003).

[55] Bernard Ramm, *Beyond Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983) 188.

[56] Sanders, *The God Who Risks* 71.

Stone-Campbell churches for "limiting" their discussion of the church to "Christological images" such as the Body of Christ because such "risks losing sight of the wealth of biblical metaphors that connect the church to the other Trinitarian persons, as well as overlooking the connection between the church and its Old Testament foundation."[57] Grenz contrasts Temple of the Spirit and royal priesthood imagery to "Christological images." And yet, this NT imagery is explicitly defined in terms of the identity of the triumphant Jesus as the Temple, the Spirit-anointed Messiah, and the true Israelite (Eph 1:20–2:22; 1 Pet 4:14; Rev 1:5–6).

Of course, the most marked departure from a Christocentric understanding of the Kingdom program of God comes in the growing tendency, especially within the reformist wing of evangelical theology, to articulate the possibility of salvation apart from explicit faith in Christ. The inclusivist position, which is held by theologians ranging from Clark Pinnock to John Sanders to Stanley Grenz, holds that salvation is universally available only through the atonement of Christ, but that this salvation may be appropriated through general revelation.[58] When, however, inclusivist evangelicals argue that the salvation of the unevangelized can come about in the same manner as that of the OT believers, they ignore the Kingdom orientation of biblical soteriology. This problem is compounded when an otherwise conservative theologian such as Millard Erickson offers the possibility that "persons who come to belief in a single powerful God, who despair of any works-righteousness to please this holy God, and who throw themselves upon the mercy of this good God, would be accepted as were the Old Testament believers."[59] Erickson offers this possibility precisely because of the "sameness" he sees in OT and NT concepts of salvation. "Salvation has always been appropriated by faith (Gal 3:6–9); this salvation rests on Christ's deliverance of us from the law (vv. 10–14; 19–29)," he writes. "Nothing has been changed in that respect."[60]

In a soteriology informed by inaugurated eschatology, however, a great deal has "changed in that respect." The NT writers speak of the salvation in Christ as the inbreaking of the eschaton, the arrival of the promised last days (Luke 2:26–32). Jesus himself ties entrance into the eschatological Kingdom to a "looking" specifically at him in faith (John 3:14–15). It is for this reason that the apostolic message, to Jews as well as to devout Gentile "God-fearers," was that the decisive, apocalyptic Day of the Lord had arrived in

[57] Stanley J. Grenz, "An Evangelical Response to Ferguson, Holloway, and Lowery: Restoring a Trinitarian Understanding of the Church in Practice," in *Evangelicalism and the Stone-Campbell Movement* (ed. William R. Baker; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002) 232.

[58] For a sketch of the inclusivist view of soteriology in relation to the Kingdom of God, see Clark H. Pinnock, "Toward a More Inclusive Eschatology," in *Looking Into the Future: Evangelical Essays in Eschatology* (ed. David W. Baker; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 249–62. For a helpful critique of "evangelical" inclusivism, see Ronald H. Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

[59] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 197. For a more developed outworking of Erickson's viewpoint here, see Millard J. Erickson, *How Shall They Be Saved? The Destiny of Those Who Do Not Hear of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).

[60] Erickson, *Christian Theology* 197.

the identity and mission of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:14–35), a turn of events that necessitated faith specifically in him as Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36–41). Thus, the apostle Peter proclaims with apocalyptic urgency to the Gentiles the necessity of explicit faith in Christ in continuity with the OT promises of the eschaton (Acts 10:34–43). Likewise, the apostle Paul addresses the Athenian philosophers with the message that a soteriological shift has taken place in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, meaning that God is "now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent" because the eschatological judgment has been committed to the resurrected Jesus (Acts 17:30–31). Paul likewise points the Corinthians to the dawning of the "last days" opportunity for salvation from the Day of the Lord, a salvation he ties to explicit faith in the crucified and resurrected Jesus of Nazareth (2 Cor 5:16–6:2).

The varying degrees of evangelical openness to inclusivist positions does not do justice to the explicitly Christocentric nature of Kingdom soteriology. Evangelical inclusivists often seek to explain the salvation of those who do not respond to the proclamation of Christ, in the working of the Spirit. Clark Pinnock therefore argues that the "universality" of the Spirit's activity allows evangelicals "to be hopeful about people who have not yet acknowledged Jesus as Lord" since grace "is extant not only in Christian contexts but in every place where the Spirit is."[61] For Pinnock, the "truth of the Incarnation does not eclipse truth about the Spirit, who was at work before Christ and is present now where Christ is not named" since the "mission of the Son is not a threat to the mission of the Spirit, or vice versa."[62] Indeed, Pinnock rejects the *filioque* language of the Nicene Creed because it "promotes Christomonism," meaning that the phrase "diminishes the role of the Spirit and gives the impression that he has no mission of his own."[63] Indeed, Pinnock asserts that the mission of the Spirit is "prior to and geographically larger than the Son's," meaning that "the Spirit can be active where the Son is not named."[64] Amos Yong, a Pentecostal scholar, further develops Pinnock's pneumatocentric soteriology by challenging evangelical paradigms that "proceed from a christological starting point and are therefore closely intertwined with christological assumptions." What if instead, Yong asks, evangelical theology should begin "with pneumatology rather than Christology?"[65]

[61] Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996) 194.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid. 196.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Amos Yong, "Discerning the Spirit(s) in the World of Religions," in *No Other Gods Before Me? Evangelicals and the Challenge of World Religions* (ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 38. The eclipse of Christology in the soteriological proposals of Pinnock and Yong is continued in Grenz, who suggests that "the finality of Christ" means "Jesus is the vehicle through whom we come to the fullest understanding of what God is like," so that through "the Spirit who was poured out into the world at the exaltation of Jesus, therefore, we enter into a fuller community with God than is enjoyed in any other religious tradition." Stanley J. Grenz, "Toward an Evangelical Theology of the Religions," *JES* 31 (1994) 64.

This is, of course, precisely the problem. In a Kingdom-oriented theology of redemptive history, the soteriological role of the Spirit means that he does not, in fact, have a "mission of his own." The Spirit is, as Richard Gaffin and Sinclair Ferguson have effectively demonstrated, "the Spirit of Christ." Jesus himself points to his bearing of the Spirit as a function of his messianic identity (Luke 4:18; 11:20; Acts 1:6–8), an understanding resonant with OT Davidic hope (Isa 11:2; 61:1–3). The apostolic preaching of Jesus as Messiah therefore pivots on his Davidic kingly activity in sending the Spirit to form sinners into a new eschatological Kingdom community (Acts 2:17, 32–36; 10:46–48; 15:7–9). Thus, Jesus picks up the messianic Kingdom expectation when he instructs his disciples, "the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about me" (John 15:26). It is not unusual, therefore, that Jesus should present the mission of the Spirit is to "glorify me" (John 16:14), if in fact the goal of the redemptive Kingdom purposes of God is to see to it that Christ "will come to have first place in everything" (Col 1:18). It is likewise not surprising that the apostle Paul should claim that salvation now comes in these last days to those who "confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead," if in fact the eschatological goal of God's redemptive Kingdom program is that "every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11).

Evangelical inclusivism not only follows classical dispensationalism in severing redemptive history from the Christocentric purposes of God, it does so in a manner remarkably consistent with the "two peoples, two dispensations" emphases of the dispensationalist fundamentalists. Just as classical dispensationalists were forced to defend themselves from Reformed fundamentalists for teaching "two ways of salvation," many reformist evangelicals tend to sever God's relationship to Israel (with Jesus inheriting the role of Israel's mediator in the new covenant era) from God's purposes with the nations.[66] As did Scofield-type dispensationalism, post-conservative inclusivism fails to see the Kingdom's holistic consummation in the one-flesh relationship of the Messiah and his eschatological Bride (Eph 5:32).

But even beyond the loss of consensus on specific Kingdom questions, the post-conservative challenge represents a loss of what the movement's founding era believed necessary to a united American evangelicalism—a cohesive theological center, in contrast with the minimal doctrinal commonalities of the earlier fundamentalism. Contemporary American evangelical theology has indeed achieved virtual unanimity on the question of the Kingdom of God, thereby overcoming the impasse preventing united action in the public square, even as the movement splinters apart over issues of first-order importance for the survival of evangelicalism as a theological movement. While the post-war evangelicals were divided on issues such as the nature of the Kingdom, they were united initially with each other (and with their fundamentalist forebears) on issues such as biblical authority and the attributes

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[66] See especially Pinnock, "Toward a More Inclusive Eschatology" 254–61.

of God. The "reformist" element within the evangelical theological coalition does not challenge this early unanimity on these matters, but instead laments it as an example of an unduly narrow Reformed hegemony that must be overcome.[67] Thus, the current debates threatening to split the evangelical theological consensus have to do with the locus of biblical authority and the nature of truth (in the debate over postmodern and communitarian evangelicalism); the question of whether God has exhaustive foreknowledge (in the debate over "open theism"); and other issues.[68] The controversies over God and Scripture are not unrelated, but are a continuation, as one "reformist" evangelical puts it, of an ongoing controversy since the 1970s between theological innovators and "neo-fundamentalist evangelicals who reject innovative, constructive theological reflection."[69] In some ways, these debates have had a positive effect on evangelical theology, by forcing orthodox theologians to respond to the new proposals with a vigorous exploration of the meaning and implications of the doctrines of God and Scripture.[70] None-

[67] Clark H. Pinnock, for example, compares the trajectory of contemporary evangelical theology with the trajectory of Fuller Theological Seminary. "Like the evangelical movement itself, I see Fuller beginning life with a sectarian, conservative and Reformed profile and evolving into a renewal component in the mainline denominations in a Barthian, neo-Reformed mode," Pinnock argues. He further asks: "Can there be any doubt at all what Henry's goals were? They had nothing to do with Pentecostalism or Methodism. He wanted Fuller to be the flagship of the neo-Reformed, post-fundamentalist evangelical movement which was getting under way. I see Fuller Seminary in the light of Carl Henry, Paul Jewett, Edward Carnell, Gleason Archer, etc. These men were Reformed (often Baptist) theologians who wanted to expound a species of Calvinism which they decided to call evangelical and expound it in an intelligent manner which would give leadership to the growing post-fundamentalist movement in America." Clark H. Pinnock, "Fuller Theological Seminary and the Nature of Evangelicalism," *Christian Scholar's Review* 23 (1993) 44–45.

[68] Perhaps the preeminent proponent of a reconsidered evangelical epistemological model of revelation and authority is theologian Stanley Grenz. Grenz outlines his proposal most succinctly in Stanley J. Grenz, "Articulating the Christian Belief-Mosaic: Theological Method after the Demise of Foundationalism," in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method* (ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000) 107–38; Stanley J. Grenz, *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000) 184–248; and Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001). The open theism proposal is articulated in, among other works, Clark H. Pinnock, et al., *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994); John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998); and Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

[69] Roger E. Olson, "Review of *Most Moved Mover* by Clark H. Pinnock and *Searching for an Adequate God* edited by John B. Cobb, Jr. and Clark H. Pinnock," *Christian Century* (30 January–6 February 2002) 37.

[70] This is especially true in the open theism debate, in which classical theists have not simply restated the arguments of classical theism, but have explored the biblical teachings on God's relationality, foreknowledge, sovereignty, and immutability. See, for instance, Millard J. Erickson, *God the Father Almighty: A Contemporary Exploration of the Divine Attributes* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998); Bruce A. Ware, *God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000); and John Frame, *No Other God: A Response to Open Theism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2001).

theless, the long-term ramifications of this debate cast uncertainty on the prospects of ever developing an evangelical theological consensus.[71] This is because, among other reasons, behind these debates looms a much larger question—what does it mean *theologically* to be called an "evangelical"?[72]

With such the case, evangelical theology resembles less the "united action" of theological allies envisioned by the movement's founders and more like the theologically fractured coalition of fundamentalists from whence they came. At least, however, the fundamentalist coalition could unite around a minimal set of doctrinal affirmations, however sketchy and reactionary they might have been. Reformist evangelical theology has been unable thus far to articulate what unites the movement beyond a vague commitment to an undefined "high view of Scripture" and an even more undefined "family resemblance" of shared evangelical identity.[73]

This crisis of theological identity can be seen in a recent monograph by reformist evangelicals Gregory Boyd and Paul Eddy, which seeks to explain the "spectrum" of evangelical theology on a range of issues.[74] The authors note in the introduction that they will only discuss evangelical options, and thus do not include debates over issues such as transubstantiation, earth worship, or universalism. The authors then, however, offer discussions of supposedly "intramural" disputes over issues on which evangelical theology has been united until the very recent past—issues such as the inspiration of Scripture, the foreknowledge of God, and the substitutionary atonement of Christ. The pre-war fundamentalists may have had an *ad hoc* creedalism, united around the doctrines under attack from modernists, but at least there was an underlying logic to their coalition. The post-conservative *ad hoc* creedalism simply cannot sustain evangelical theological reflection—largely because it is no longer possible to distinguish between primary, secondary, and tertiary doctrinal matters.

[71] For instance, see Steve W. Lemke, "Evangelical Theology in the Twenty-First Century" (paper presented at the Southwestern regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Fort Worth, TX, 7 April 2000). "Like most coalitions, the evangelical coalition will break down, probably within the next ten years," Lemke predicts. "I do not know which issue or issues will drive this division—biblical inerrancy, the openness of God, the ordination of women—but I believe that a Neo-Evangelical Theological Society or a Really Neo-Evangelical Theological Society will come into existence soon."

[72] For various perspectives on the debate over evangelical definitional boundaries, see R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "'Evangelical': What's in a Name?" in *The Coming Evangelical Crisis: Current Challenges to the Authority of Scripture and the Gospel* (ed. John H. Armstrong; Chicago: Moody, 1996) 29–44; Millard J. Erickson, *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Postconservative Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997); and Roger E. Olson, "Reforming Evangelical Theology," in *Evangelical Futures* 201–8.

[73] The frustration with the loss of evangelical identity can be seen in Millard Erickson's assessment of reformist evangelicalism. "It does not yet appear that these theologians have moved so far as to surrender the right to be called evangelicals," Erickson writes. "But such movement cannot be unlimited" (Erickson, *The Evangelical Left* 147).

[74] Gregory A. Boyd and Paul R. Eddy, *Across the Spectrum: Issues in Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002).

III. CONCLUSION

The post-war evangelical movement was formed in frustration with the doctrinal fragmentation of fundamentalism, a fragmentation focused on the lack of consensus on the Kingdom of God between the Reformed and dispensationalist streams of conservative Protestantism. By the late twentieth century, the Kingdom disputes were no more, with evangelicals reaching consensus on the major sticking points to evangelical theological cohesion. The emergence of post-conservative proposals, however, represents a challenge to this Kingdom consensus. Many of the revisions to the doctrines of God, Scripture, the church, and salvation represent a reversal to the earlier Kingdom concepts of the older dispensationalist/fundamentalist tradition which neo-evangelical theologians such as Carl Henry sought to transcend and reform. At the same time, the conflicted state of evangelical theology—on even the most basic of issues—now surpasses the fragmentation of early twentieth-century fundamentalism. Like the fundamentalists, the identity of post-conservative evangelicalism is reduced to the "fundamentals." Except that, unlike the conservatives of the older era, no one seems to be able to define what they are. After a half-century of doctrinal development, American evangelical theology is now moving leftward toward Scofield.